Taking Your iPod touch to the Max

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Bringing Home the iPod Touch

With the iPod touch, Apple has launched an entirely new generation of iPods. Gone are small screens and click wheels. Gone are text-based interfaces and minimal customization. The touch introduces interactive, wide-screen technology that brings music and video directly to your fingertips. If you're ready to move into this new sixth-generation space, this chapter is for you. You're about to read how to pick and purchase your iPod, how to bring that baby home with you, and how to get started using it. This chapter covers the first steps you'll need to take and the decisions you'll need to make.

Buying Your iPod Touch

If you don't already have an iPod touch, your first two decisions are which model to buy and where to buy it. This section covers some things to consider in the decision-making process.

Picking Your iPod Touch

In the world of the touch, the choices aren't wide. As with other iPods, usually only a couple of models are available at a particular time. For example, at launch, there was an 8GB model and a 16GB model, and that was pretty much it.

So how do you choose the model that is right for you? It all comes down to memory. Do you want to pay more for a few more gigabytes of memory? It's not as if those extra gigabytes offer an inexhaustible resource. With enough videos and movies, you can easily run out of storage on a 160GB iPod classic, let alone a teeny flash-memory-based iPod touch. So here are some questions you need to ask yourself:

How big is your music library? If it's large, the extra space on some iPod models helps to store additional music and podcasts. Remember that you don't need to bring your entire media collection with you—and with the iTunes Wi-Fi Music Store, you can buy music on the go.

How many videos do you want to carry around? A single two-hour movie can occupy more than a gigabyte of storage. If you travel a lot, especially on airplanes, you may want to pay more to store additional movies and TV shows with those extra gigabytes. Although the Wi-Fi store currently does not offer videos for sale or rental, those options may show up at some point. A few extra gigabytes can make a big difference in deciding whether you have the space to rent or buy a video on the go.

Do you plan to carry a lot of pictures? Although pictures are pretty small, if you carry a few thousand of them around, they do add up to some serious storage consumption. Did you laugh at the idea of carrying that many pictures around on your iPod? Apple's built-in iPhoto support makes it simple to put years of photo archives onto your touch with a single synchronization option.

Do you need to carry a lot of data? You might not think of your iPod as a data-storage device, but there are ways to use it to bring data along with you on the road. If you think you might need to do this, those extra gigabytes could be put to good use.

How long do you plan to use this iPod? If you're an early adopter who plans to trade up at the earliest possible opportunity whenever Apple offers a new unit, you may want to save your pennies now in the hope that a better unit with more memory debuts soon. But if you want to get the most use out of the iPod for the longest period of time, paying more up-front means you won't outgrow the memory quite as fast.

Considering System Requirements

As with all iPods, in order to effectively use your touch, you will need a computer with a Universal Serial Bus (USB) 2.0 port and an Internet connection running iTunes 7.4 or later. iPods need to connect to your computer on a regular basis to synchronize music, photos, calendars, and so forth. Nearly all music, video, and data management is done through the iTunes program on your computer. You need iTunes for loading media onto your iPod and synchronizing it to your computer-based calendar and bookmarks.

Before you purchase that iPod, ask yourself whether you have a computer that has all these features available. If not, you might not be able to properly use your iPod.

■**Note** If you haven't yet put iTunes on your computer, grab your free copy from `http://www.apple.com/itunes`. Versions are available for both OS X and Windows systems, and installing iTunes is quick and easy.

Deciding Where to Buy Your iPod

After deciding which model you want, you're probably ready to pull out your credit card and get that iPod (see Figure 1-1). So where should you go? To an Apple Store? To another retailer like Target? Or should you buy online? Here are some points to consider:

Figure 1-1. *The iPod touch introduces an entirely new generation of iPod interaction. You can purchase your touch online at store.apple.com, at a brick-and-mortar Apple Store, or at third-party retailers.*

Availability: Non-Apple retailers may or may not have the most up-to-date Apple units. Apple retail stores and Apple's online store always do.

Price: As far as the online/offline question goes, price-wise it's mostly a wash. At a store or online, you'll pay the same amount for your iPod. The taxes are the same, and shipping is free. Non-Apple retailers rarely offer price breaks on Apple products, although they sometimes offer deals, such as included gift cards, that provide extra value for your money.

Refurbs: If you want to buy a refurbished iPod touch, the Apple Store will be your only choice for some time. Refurbished models usually debut a few months after product rollout, and they rarely reach third-party vendors before a year or more has passed.

Wait: Buying at a store means you don't need to wait—the iPod is in your hands immediately. Buying online means your product must be shipped, and you'll need to pay extra if you want expedited service.

Engraving: If you want your iPod engraved, you need to buy online. Apple offers free laser engraving with your iPod purchase. This allows you to add a personal message or identifying information, like an e-mail address or phone number, that will help your iPod make its way back to you if lost.

Hands-on testing: Whether you make your purchase online or at a retail location, you can always walk into an Apple retail store and test an iPod in person before you buy one. Of course, once you're there, it's pretty easy to hand over a credit card and walk out of the store with a new iPod touch right there and then.

The personal touch: Unless you need an online-only feature (such as engraving or a refurbished model), I recommend buying in person at a store. You can ask questions. You can make human connections. If something goes wrong with your purchase, a person is there to help you work through it. This is not to say that calling Apple's support line is insufficient, but being face-to-face with a real person makes solutions happen more readily.

■**Note** The sad fact of the matter is that a significant, although small, percentage of iPod purchases do not go smoothly. Some people end up with a screen flaw, such as dead screen pixels, which appear as small, black dots on your display. If such a problem is found soon after purchase, it may involve a trade for a new unit. The chances of resolving issues increase significantly when you talk to someone in person. The chances increase further when you deal with certain retailers with superior consumer-protection policies. Apple or (even better) Costco policies generally produce more satisfactory results than Target or Best Buy policies.

Understanding Return and Exchange Policies

When your touch is purchased from Apple, standard iPod return and exchange policies are in effect. These policies are distinct from the ones that apply to iPod touch's cousin, the iPhone. The touch policies are, instead, in line with other iPods:

- You have 14 days from the time of purchase to return or exchange your unit.

- There are no "open box" penalties. You don't pay extra to return a touch after you've opened its package.

- You cannot return the iPod if it has been engraved.

In addition to these policies, Apple will usually swap out, without penalty, any unit that's clearly defective due to manufacturing issues.

Bringing Your iPod Home

Once you buy your iPod touch, it's time to take it home and get it set up. This involves several steps. First, you unpack the box and review its contents. Then you connect it to your computer and prepare the touch for day-to-day use. The following sections will walk you through this process.

Unpacking Your iPod Touch

iPod packaging (see Figure 1-2) is a small work of art. The touch ships in a box that contains the player itself, a soft cloth for cleaning its screen, a small Lucite (plastic) stand, a USB connector cable, those famous white earbuds, and a packet of documentation. Each of these items is important and will help you in your day-to-day use of your iPod.

Stereo headphones   Dock connector to USB cable

Stand   Polishing cloth
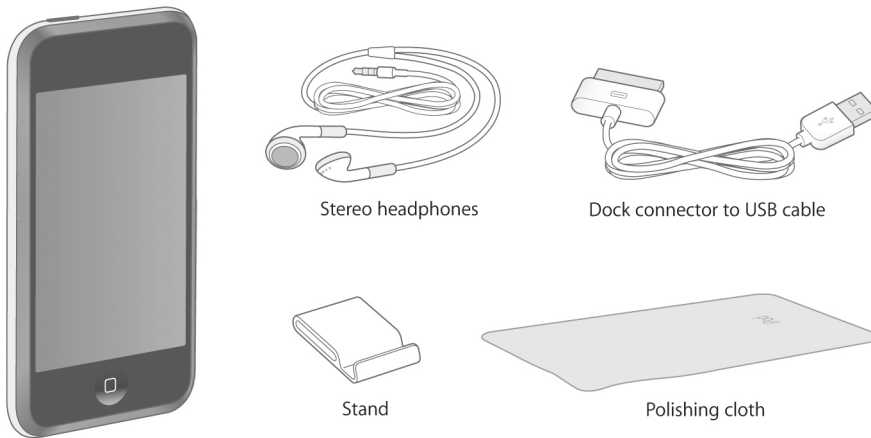
Figure 1-2. *The iPod touch package combines compactness with beauty. It contains your new iPod as well documentation, earbuds, a Lucite stand, and more. (Image courtesy of Apple, Inc.)*

Here's a rundown of what's in the box:

Cleaning cloth: Daily use of your iPod leaves smudges. It's an inescapable reality for a device that functions using a touch-based interface. Apple included this cloth in the packaging to help you clean your iPod screen more effectively than you would, say, using your T-shirt.

Lucite stand: The included stand allows your iPod to rest on its side without falling down. For example, you can watch movies on your iPod without needing to hold it the entire time. You can also use it while you recharge your iPod, so it occupies less surface area on your desk. The stand is very clever, but also very easy to lose! It's both small and see-through.

■**Tip** Pick up a clear plastic business-card holder at an office supply store (like Staples or Office Depot) to replace the stand once you lose it—which, if you're normal, will be shortly after purchase. Card holders cost between $1 and $2 dollars and are easily replaced. Portable picture frames, such as those sold at art supply stores (like Michaels) also make good iPod stands.

Cable: The USB cable attaches your iPod to your computer.

Stereo headset (earbuds): It wouldn't be an iPod without those iconic white earbuds. Seriously, you can do better both in terms of audio quality and protecting your ears, but people do love those white earbuds. They tell the world that you're listening to iPod.

Reviewing the iPod Touch Features

After unpacking your iPod, take a few minutes to discover more about your new purchase. Figure 1-3 identifies the basic features on your touch.
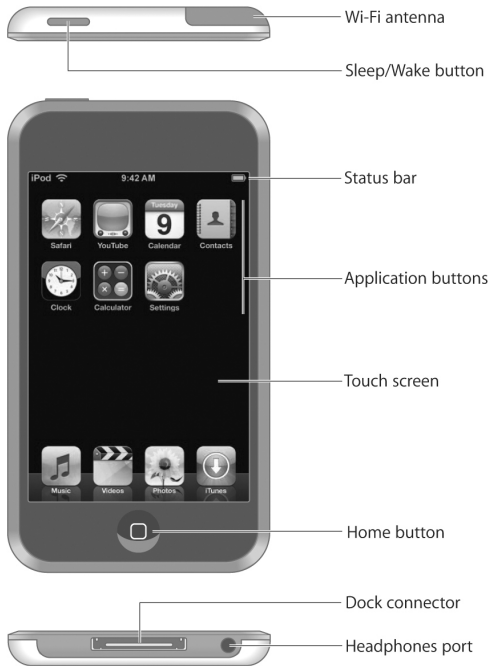
Figure 1-3. *Some important iPod touch features include the Sleep/Wake button, which allows you to conserve energy by sleeping the screen; the Home button, which takes you to your iPod's home screen from any application; and the dock connector at the bottom, which allows you to connect your iPod to your personal computer. (Image courtesy of Apple, Inc.)*

The bottom of the iPod houses a jack (or, as Apple calls it, the "headphones port"), into which you can plug your earbuds' microphone, and an indented slot for connecting to your USB cable. The top of the iPod offers a Sleep/Wake button that is used to power on and off certain features. The iPod's front has a large touch screen and a single Home button. Turn your iPod touch over to see the large, black square at the top corner. This square houses your iPod's Wi-Fi antenna.

Preparing for a Fresh Start

You've unpacked your iPod but haven't yet connected it to iTunes. Now is a good time to review data on your computer. When you connect your iPod to iTunes, it will synchronize itself to your media library and, depending on your computer, to your bookmarks, your calendars, and so forth. Before you go forward, here are some items you may want to either expand or clean up so your iPod starts out its life with the freshest possible data:

Contacts: iPod can sync with Outlook or Outlook Express on Windows, Address Book or Entourage on a Macintosh, and Yahoo! Address Book on the Internet. To prepare for your first sync, review your existing contacts and make sure they're up-to-date with current phone numbers and e-mail addresses. If you use another program to manage contacts, consider migrating your contacts to one of these solutions. If you would rather not, that's OK, too.

Calendar: Your iPod can also sync with computer-based calendars. The touch supports iCal and Entourage calendars on the Mac and Outlook calendars on Windows. Get your calendars into shape before your first sync, and you'll be ready to monitor your schedule.

Bookmarks: Spend a little time reviewing and cleaning up your Internet Explorer or Safari bookmarks. Some housecleaning now will make it much easier for you to find your favorite web sites from your iPod touch.

Music: iPod touch models offer relatively small storage space when compared to, for example, iPod classic's generous 160GB hard drive. To make the most of this limited space, set up playlists for your favorite songs and podcasts. Since, in all likelihood, you won't be able to synchronize your entire library to your new iPod, invest time now in weeding through your media to find those items you most want to have on hand.

■**Caution** Make sure you've authorized your computer in iTunes (Store ➤ Authorize Computer) before synchronizing your music. If you don't, your music won't be copied to your iPod.

Software and operating system: Make sure you've updated to iTunes 7.4 or later. And, if you're using a Macintosh, make sure you've updated your operating system to at least OS X 10.4.10. You can download the latest version of iTunes from Apple at `http://www.apple.com/itunes/download`.

iTunes Account: If you plan to purchase music using the iPod's iTunes Wi-Fi Music Store, Apple requires a current iTunes account. If you don't already have one, you can sign up for a US account as described next.

Creating a New iTunes Account

Creating a new iTunes account requires a US address and credit card. Here are the steps you'll need to follow in order to create that account:

1. Launch the iTunes application and wait for it to load.

2. Click the iTunes Store entry in the column on the left side of the window, and wait for the store screen to load. You must be connected to the Internet for this to happen, because all the storefront information is stored at Apple.

3. Click the Sign In button at the top-right corner of the screen. iTunes opens the sign-in dialog box (see Figure 1-4), which will allow you to either sign in with an existing account or create a new one.

Figure 1-4. *The iTunes sign-in dialog box allows you to sign in to iTunes with your existing account or begin the process of creating a new account.*

4. Click Create New Account. The screen clears, and a message welcoming you to the iTunes Store is displayed.

5. Review the terms of service, and then click Agree. A new dialog box appears, prompting you to create your account.

6. Enter your e-mail address and a password (you must enter the password twice for verification). Also enter a question and answer that will help verify your identity and the month and day of your birth. Review the other options on the page, and adjust them as desired before clicking Continue. Again, the screen will clear, and you'll move on to the final account-creation step.

7. Enter a valid US credit card and the billing information for that credit card. These must match to finish creating your account. When you have entered the information, click Continue.

After following these steps, you will receive a confirmation e-mail at the address you specified while signing up. The e-mail welcomes you to the iTunes Store and provides you with the customer service web address (`http://www.apple.com/support/itunes/store`).

Connecting Your iPod Touch to Your Computer

You're now ready to unpack your unit and connect it to your computer. Here are the steps you need to take:

1. Remove the iPod from its box, and then extract it from its factory wrapping. Also unwrap the included USB cable.

2. Locate the two ends of the USB cable. One is thin and marked with a standard three-pronged USB symbol. The other is wide and marked with a rectangle with a line in it.

3. Orient your iPod. On the back of your iPod, the apple and the word *iPod* show you which way is up (see Figure 1-5). The dock connector is at the bottom of your iPod touch.

Figure 1-5. *Orient your iPod by locating the Apple symbol and the word iPod on its back. The black square is at the top, the dock connector at the bottom. With the iPod oriented facedown like this, the Sleep/Wake button is located on the top-right side, opposite the black square.*

4. Connect the wide end of the USB cable to the bottom of your iPod touch. Be gentle but firm, without twisting or forcing the connection. Connect the thin end to a spare USB 2.0 port on your computer.

5. iTunes will launch, and your iPod will chime softly.

The iPod's Connect to iTunes screen has an image that looks like the end of your dock cable pointing to an iTunes logo. If your iPod does not automatically power on and display this screen, press and hold the Sleep/Wake button. With the main screen facing toward you, this button is found at the top left of the iPod. After a few seconds, the iPod should wake up and display the white Apple logo as it powers on. If the iPod does not respond and does not display either the white Apple logo or the Connect to iTunes screen, contact the store where you purchased the iPod.

Startup problems should not be related to battery power. The iPod ships fully charged. The steps shown here, especially steps 2 through 4, ensure that your iPod is receiving power from your computer. So if your touch is not powering up properly, and if you're not seeing that Connect to iTunes screen, you need to return the iPod and find out what's wrong.

Setting Up Your iPod Touch

You've plugged in your iPod. iTunes has launched, recognized your new iPod, and opened its iPod Setup Assistant (see Figure 1-6). Now you have your opportunity to set up your new iPod touch, as outlined in the following steps. Be aware that these steps may vary slightly as Apple updates and changes iTunes.

Figure 1-6. *The iPod Setup Assistant lets you name your iPod and decide which items to automatically synchronize to it.*

1. If you want to name your iPod something other than "*your name*'s iPod," enter a new name into the "The name of my iPod is" field. Do not press Enter or Return, and do not click Done.

2. Uncheck both boxes in this window: "Automatically sync songs to my iPod" and "Automatically sync photos to my iPod." It's far easier to manage these choices manually.

3. Click Done. iTunes closes the Setup Assistant and moves you to the Your Apple ID screen (see Figure 1-7).

Your Apple ID

If you have an Apple ID, please enter it below. If you have a .Mac membership, it is a valid Apple ID. Simply enter your member name as name@mac.com in the field where prompted below.

◉ Use my Apple ID below to register my iPod

Apple ID

`bill@foo.com`

Example: steve@mac.com

Password

`••••••••••`   (Forgot Password?)

○ I do not have an Apple ID

Country

[United States   ▲▼]

(Cancel)   (Previous) (Continue)

Figure 1-7. *The iPod registration process uses your Apple ID to register your touch with Apple.*

4. Assuming you've already set up your Apple account, enter your Apple ID and password into the fields provided. (You can choose the "I do not have an Apple ID" option if you either do not have or do not want an Apple account.) Select your country, and then click Continue. The Registration Information screen opens.

5. In the Registration Information screen, iTunes prompts you to enter or, if you already have an account, to confirm your name, address, and phone number.

6. Notice the "I would like to receive Apple news" check box at the bottom of this screen. Uncheck this option to opt out of receiving Apple marketing e-mail.

7. Recheck your information and click Continue. The A Few More Questions screen appears (see Figure 1-8).

Figure 1-8. *Apple will not let you register your iPod without revealing personal details. Feel free to lie or obfuscate. The company has no legal right to this information.*

8. On the A Few More Questions screen, Apple requests information about your job, your age, and your iPod use. As this information request is intrusive, feel free to choose Other, and make up an age and a reason for use. As Figure 1-8 shows, Apple will not let you proceed without answers. You are under no compulsion to offer truthful ones. This is unrelated to contracts or terms of use. It's simply Apple being nosy and trying to earn money by marketing to you. Click Register to finish your registration.

Synchronizing Your New iPod

Once you've named and registered your iPod, you're ready to perform your first synchronization. In the iTunes source list, which is the blue column on the left side of the iTunes screen, locate the DEVICES section and click the name of your iPod. This opens its Preferences window (see Figure 1-9).

■**Tip** Click your iPod's name a second time to open a text edit field that allows you to edit the name. You can name your iPod more creatively than the default (your name and "iPod"). I call my iPod touch "fooey," just for the laugh.
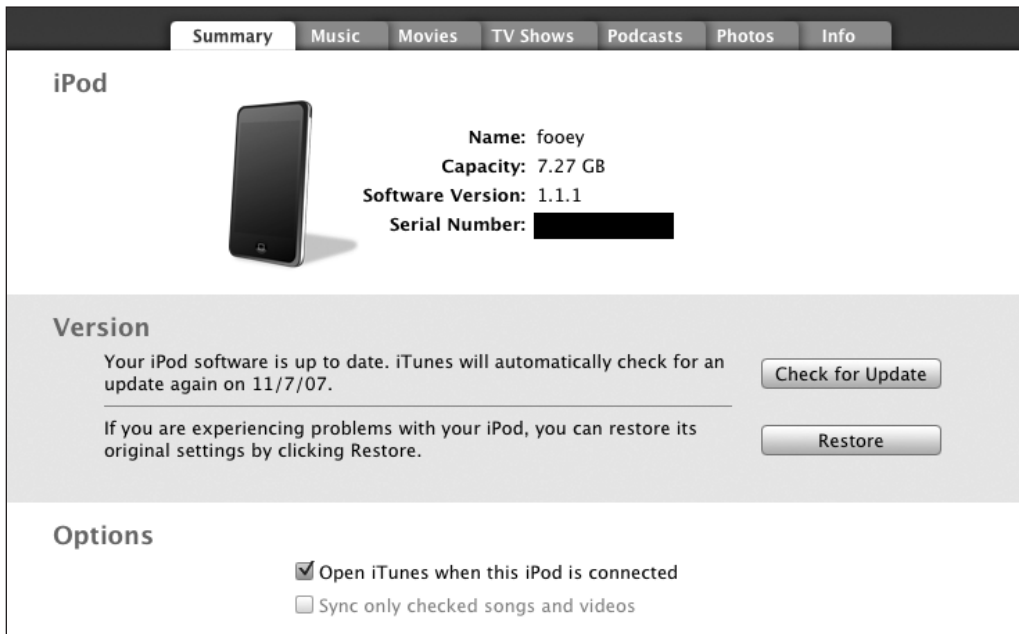

Figure 1-9. *iTunes lets you manage the content loaded onto and synchronized with your iPod. Each tab offers a variety of controls, allowing you to choose the information that will be loaded onto your touch at each sync.*

The tabs along the top of the Preferences window allow you to set each of the options associated with your iPod, as follows:

- The Summary tab displays an overview including your iPod's name, capacity, currently installed software version, and serial number. From this page, you can check for software updates and restore your iPod touch to a pristine, factory-installed condition.

- The Music tab specifies which songs, playlists, and music videos you want to store on your iPod. If you own a large music library, you'll want to select just your favorite playlists or create Smart Playlists (see Chapter 4) to establish an ever-changing collection.

- The Movies, TV Shows, and Podcasts tabs allow you to select individual shows or recent unwatched/unlistened-to items. Make your selections for these tabs, and then click Apply.

- The Photos tab lets you synchronize your iPod photo collection with a folder on your computer, such as My Photos, or with iPhoto or Aperture.

- The Info tab allows you to select which contacts, calendars, and bookmarks are synchronized to your iPod. Select the items you want to sync by checking the corresponding check boxes, and then click Apply.

- The capacity bar at the bottom of the screen monitors how much space remains on your device.

Insuring and Repairing Your iPod

Your iPod is covered under Apple's Limited Warranty for 90 days. This includes one complimentary support incident within the first 90 days of product ownership.

You can add iPod touch AppleCare for $59. This extends your hardware repair coverage to two years in total from the date of purchase. If you're interested, you can purchase AppleCare online at the Apple Store (`http://store.apple.com`).

Once the warranty expires, iPod touch repair costs vary depending on the unit's defect, plus tax, plus $29.95 for shipping and handling. Apple will replace your iPod touch battery for $79 (plus tax, plus $6.95 shipping and handling) if your unit is out of warranty.

You can find a complete list of ways to contact Apple Support at `http://www.apple.com/support/contact`.

■**Caution** If you plan to hack your iPod touch, be aware that unauthorized modifications will void your warranty. Apple also excludes coverage for damages from accidents (like dropping your iPod onto a concrete floor), unauthorized service (like trying to replace your own battery), and misuse (don't use your iPod as a hammer).

Regarding insuring your iPod, check with your renter's or home insurance carrier to see how much you'll need to pay for an iPod touch rider (a rider is placed on top of an existing policy, adding coverage for a specific item not covered under the standard plan). Allstate, Geico, and State Farm quote about $5 to $20 per year on top of an existing policy.

If you can, make sure to back up your iPod by synchronizing it to iTunes *before* bringing it in for service. Apple will restore your touch to factory condition, which means you'll lose any data stored on it during the repair and service process.

■**Note** Unlike with an iPhone, Apple does not offer loaner iPods when you bring in your iPod for service.

Accessorizing Your iPod

At this time, the iPod touch accessory market remains rather limited, and Apple packages pretty much everything you need in the box. You'll surely want to buy a better headset than the standard (and cheap) earbuds that ship with your iPod.

Purchasing a case is another thing you may consider. Beware of cases that fit around the iPod unit itself. Many of these accessories block access to parts of the touch screen, and some may cause wear or scratching. Soft carry bags and socks are good choices for protecting your iPod touch without interfering with its functionality.

Finally, consider buying a wired remote control. This allows you to control audio playback while the iPod remains in your pocket. Unlike previous iPod models, the touch offers no physical playback controls on the device itself. To pause playback or switch tracks, you must view and access virtual controls on the screen. A wired remote lets you push buttons instead. You can pick up a remote such as the Borgvik for about $10 at retailers like Kaidomain.com (http://kaidomain.com). The iPod touch seems to work with most accessories made for the iPod nano, classic, and video models.

Summary

In this chapter, you've seen how to select and purchase your iPod touch. You've discovered what's involved in setting up an iTunes account, activating your iPod, and performing your first sync. To wind things up, here is a quick overview of some key points from this chapter:

- iPod touch model choices are limited, but whichever unit you choose, you'll probably want to buy it in person at a store, unless you need an online-only feature like engraving.

- Make sure you have a computer that is compatible with the iPod before purchasing an iPod touch.

- If you want to hack your iPod touch, the tools are out there. Use them at your own risk, and be aware that Apple may disable those hacks at any time.

- iPods are not cheap. Protect your investment by insuring your touch, and consider adding AppleCare for two years of coverage (from the date of purchase) against hardware repairs.

- Your iPod touch purchase entitles you to one complimentary support incident within the first 90 days of product ownership.